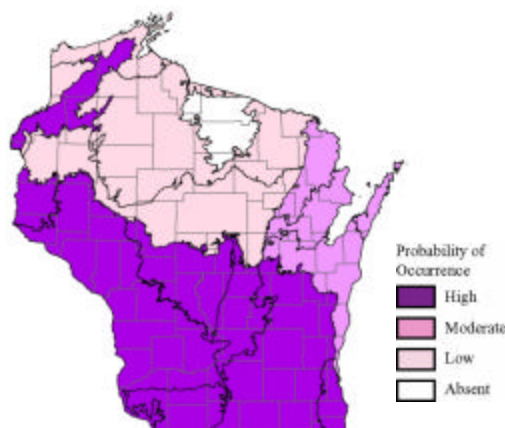


## Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)

### Species Assessment Scores\*

State rarity:	3
State threats:	3.5
State population trend:	4
Global abundance:	4
Global distribution:	5
Global threats:	3.5
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	3.9
Area of importance:	4

\* Please see the [Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries \(Section 3.1.1\)](#) for definitions of criteria and scores.



### Ecological Landscape Associations

Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

### Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Sand Hills	Emergent marsh
Central Sand Hills	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Central Sand Hills	Inland lakes
Central Sand Plains	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Central Sand Plains	Oak barrens
Central Sand Plains	Pine barrens
Central Sand Plains	Sand prairie
Northwest Sands	Emergent marsh
Northwest Sands	Emergent marsh - wild rice
Northwest Sands	Inland lakes
Northwest Sands	Pine barrens
Northwest Sands	Submergent marsh
Southeast Glacial Plains	Dry prairie
Southeast Glacial Plains	Emergent marsh
Southeast Glacial Plains	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Southeast Glacial Plains	Inland lakes
Southeast Glacial Plains	Oak opening
Southwest Savanna	Dry prairie
Southwest Savanna	Oak opening
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Emergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak barrens
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak opening
Western Coulee and Ridges	Sand prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Submergent marsh
Western Prairie	Emergent marsh

### **Threats and Issues**

- Increases in nest predators associated with humans (coyotes, raccoons, skunks, etc.) may be significantly lowering nesting success.
- The predicted warmer and drier climate in Wisconsin would reduce wetland habitat, increase the active season, and may change competitive interactions with other turtles.
- Agriculture and urban sprawl have fragmented the landscape and increased traffic resulting in increased highway mortality, habitat loss, and lower recruitment rates (through loss of females and increased nest predation rates).
- Wetland losses and degradation (especially from invasive species) have lowered carrying capacity.
- Prescribed burns are known to cause mortality.
- Winter drawdowns are known to cause mortality.
- Stocking fish into natural wetlands without fish lowers the carrying capacity for turtles by reducing food resources. Blanding's are probably especially sensitive to fish stocking since they favor fishless wetlands.
- Invasive wetland plants such as reed canary grass and giant reed grass lower habitat quality and turtle carrying capacity.
- Pollution could very well be an issue for this long lived species that feeds in sediments, but there are no data available to evaluate this threat.

### **Priority Conservation Actions**

- Long term protection and management of essential habitats is needed. Habitats must be sufficiently large and complex to meet all habitat needs, and not fragmented by roads and development.
- Implement drawdown management timing policy on all affected waters where Department of Natural Resources approval is required.
- Restore drained wetlands.
- Restore connectivity and quality of nesting habitats.
- Consider head-starting (i.e., the captive rearing of wild-produced hatchlings that grows them to a point of significantly reduced predation rates, typically for 10 to 11 months immediately following hatching) where recruitment is compromised. Initiate research regarding the long-term effects of head-starting.
- Recommend the installation of permanent underpasses and/or barriers for highway projects where Blanding's mortality is believed to impact species recovery.
- Wildlife habitat in general is poorly represented in zoning and planning and major strides are needed in policy and education here.
- Long-term monitoring of several small and large populations statewide is needed to help document status and trends.
- Public education efforts about turtle mortalities along roads, including installing turtle crossing signs, are needed.
- Programs that provide economic incentives to landowners to restore wetland habitats, establish wetland buffers, and improve habitat connectivity should continue and expand.